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Japan

December 6, 1978

Mr. Senator Gary W.Hart
Rm.254 Russell Senate Office
Bldg.,
20510 Washington D.C.

Dear Senator Hart,

We have had several discussions with Dr. Daniel Ellsberg who made a number of ascertations-all of which he has made previously in the U.S., as has been reported in the Japanese press-are of major concern to us.

which

These include;

1. that as a member of a study group for a Commander in Chief Pacific, in 1959-1960, he learned in his official investigations, of the presence of a U.S. Navy LST permanently anchored immediately offshore the U.S. Marine Base at Iwakuni with nuclear weapons stored on board for the use of U.S. planes at Iwakuni.

2. that in 1961 he reported the situation to Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze, to whom he was a consultant, who investigated the report for Secretary McNamara and confirmed it, finding that the weapons aboard was indeed permanently in the territorial waters of Japan except for brief periods of refittings at its home port in Okinawa.

3. that a legal opinion was given in the Defense Department that presence of nuclear weapons in this fashion would be a clearcut violation of Japan-U.S. Security treaty in the absence of prior consultations and consent of the Japanese Government.

4. that following his report and the subsequent confirmation, the LST was permitted by Secretary McNamara to remain in Japanese waters.

5. that it was reported to him by Lt. Earl Spenard of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department of Golden, Colorado, while Dr. Ellsberg was in Lt. Spenard's custody on Aug. 9, 1978, that while Lt. Spenard had been stationed at Iwakuni as a Marine pilot from 1959-63, he had known that American thermonuclear weapons were stored continuously onshore on the base for the use of Phantoms and Skyhawks stationed there and that he had personally had a variable yield multi-megaton thermonuclear weapons aboard his plane on the "hot-pad" or alert air strip during the Laos Crisis of May 1961. According to Dr. Ellsberg, Lt. Spenard ascertained that these weapons were brought into Iwakuni for storage by air.

6. that Dr. Ellsberg furthermore learned in his official research in 1959-61 that President Eisenhower had sent a secret letter in 1957 to various high military commanders including Commander in Chief Pacific delegating authority to initiate nuclear operations without immediate express command of the President under certain conditions, including outage of communication.

Dr. Ellsberg states that President Kennedy, upon learning of this delegation-which Dr. Ellsberg had reported to Mr. McGeorge Bundy in early 1961-several months after entering office, signed new, equivalent letter of delegation to these commanders, and that President Johnson later did likewise.

Dr. Ellsberg's statements have been repeatedly reported in the Japanese press since Aug. 9 and may lead to inquiry in the Diet. Various spokesmen for the Japanese Government have responded saying that the U.S. Government has never consulted it on the possible introduction of nuclear weapons in the territory of Japan and that therefore, the Japanese Government is confident that no such weapons have been stored or introduced into Japan.

If Dr. Ellsberg's findings as to LST or his account of Lt. Spenard's assertions are correct, it would follow that either there has been a most grave violation of a fundamental provision of the Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty or else that the officials responding for the Japanese Government have been ignorant of consultations that have in fact taken place.

The gravity with which we view either of these possibilities leads us to write to inquire directly whether you could help throw light on these matters.

It would be most helpful to us if your constituent Lt. Spenard could confirm or deny the statement Dr. Ellsberg cites and add any further detail that seem relevant. If Lt. Spenard should feel currently constrained by military regulations from answering our inquiry, we would appreciate your using your good office to seek his release from such constraints in the interest of enlightening the Japanese public on a matter of such universal and deeply felt concern.

Even informal confirmation or denial by Lt. Spenard of his part of Dr. Ellsberg's assertions would be most helpful. However, a formal investigation which sought evidence- including but going beyond the testimony of Lt. Spenard, Dr. Ellsberg, Mr. Paul Nitze or Secretary Robert McNamara and the relevant current officials would be even more valuable in answering the question whether such weapons have been stored at bases in addition to Iwakuni and whether such weapons are present in the territory of Japan today.

Moreover if it should turn out that there have been or presently are such weapons, the question raised by Dr. Ellsberg concerning the precise authority controlling the use of these weapons under all circumstances and also of the adequacy of storage and precautions against sabotage, theft, accidents and unauthorized actions would become subjects of investigations of direct concern to the U.S., and the possible existence of such weapons is of utmost concern to the Japanese people. This would be true even if some consultation existed, contrary to the information available to the Government spokesmen. But of course we would further wish to know the precise nature of such consultation.

We are writing to you since Lt. Spenard is a resident of your state. We trust that you enlist the cooperation of any of your colleagues who could be helpful in this matter.

If open hearings should result from this inquiry, we would be interested in sending our observer; and even prior to that we would be happy to send a delegation to make our interest more precise.

We look forward to hearing from you any preliminary information you can provide. Meanwhile we should be conducting our own inquiry and we may wish the Diet that Dr. Ellsberg be called to testify on his knowledge.

Sincerely yours,

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/Tetsu Noda/

Member of the House of Councillors

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/Kohsuke Uehara/

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岩間嘉幸

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/Sadao Yamahana/

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